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October 30, 2000

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20785

To Whom It May Concern:

At the request of The Farm Sanctuary, I am taking time as a member to send a letter concerning the downed animal trade (Docket Number 98P-0151/CP1). Members are being asked to write FDA and request that The Farm Sanctuary's petition to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals be granted.

Attached for your information is a copy of the article in the Fall issue of Farm Sanctuary News. The article was extremely depressing to read. In order to sleep tonight, I was determined to at least take the time to try and do what I could to change this inhumane practice. (I still may not be able to sleep, having seen the pictures of downed animals.)

I appreciate the time you have taken to read my letter. And I hope that the Farm Sanctuary's petition is granted.

Sincerely,



Corinne W. Merwarth

98P-0151

C2651

USDA Says "No Downers" in School Lunch Program

This summer, the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) reviewed and revised its policy regarding the purchase of ground beef for the National School Lunch Program (beginning in School Year 2000-2001) and other federal food and nutrition programs, and it has taken a major step in the direction of ending the downed animal trade. According to an agency statement, "USDA will no longer accept ground beef that includes product from non-ambulatory cattle, commonly known as 'downers'."



Carcasses originating from cattle which must be processed in accordance with *FSIS Directive 6900.1R1 - Humane Handling of Disabled Livestock*, issued November 2, 1998, must be segregated to assure that the product from these carcasses is not included in the USDA purchased ground beef."

This development shows a growing consensus—even among industry and government officials—that the marketing and slaughter of downed animals causes intolerable animal suffering and poses an unnecessary risk to human health.



Letters to FDA Urgently Needed!

Letters are urgently needed to end the downed animal trade. Please write to the Food and Drug Administration's Dockets Management Branch to urge that they grant our petition to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals—docket number 98P-0151/CP1. *It is critical that you include the docket number in your comment.*

Contact:

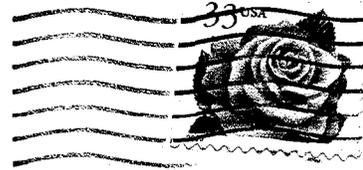
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Some points to make include:

- Animals who are too sick or injured even to stand should not be allowed to enter the human food chain.
- In addition to posing an increased risk for bacterial contamination, there is evidence that some downed animals may be afflicted with a form of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or "Mad Cow Disease"), a disease which has been linked to a fatal human illness (CJD or Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease).
- It is practically impossible to move downed animals humanely, and they are typically pushed with tractors or dragged with chains—inhumane processes which cause injuries ranging from bruises and abrasions, to broken bones and torn ligaments.
- Downed animals comprise a very small percentage of animals slaughtered, and prohibiting their marketing will cause no undue economic hardship.
- Industry experts have estimated that 90% of downed animals can be prevented with better care and handling. Removing the market for downed animals will provide an incentive for the industry to prevent downed animals in the first place.



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